B. H.195

AN EXPLANATION

OF THE

Drayning Workes

VVhich have beene lately made for the KINGS MAIESTIE IN *Cambridge Shire*,

By the direction of

Sir Cornelius Virmuden.

Written by *Andrewes Burrell*, Gent.

VVherein is discovered how the said Sir *Cornelius* hath abused the KINGS MAIESTIE, and many of his loving Subjects.

Printed in the yeare 1641.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

An Explanation of the Drayning Workes which have been lately made for the Kings Majesty in Cambridge Shire, by the direction of Sir *Cornelius Virmuden.*

Written by Andrewes Burrell, *Gent.*

Wherein is discovered how the said Sir *Cornelius* hath abused the Kings Majesty, and many of his loving Subjects.

FIrst, He hath disgraced the KINGS Workes, by making weake Bankes, when hee might have made them strong.

SEcondly, by making hollow and counterfeit Bankes of light Moore Hassocks, and Sedge, skimming and destroying three times so much ground as would have performed the service, if he had taken the best of the soyle.

THirdly, he hath disgraced the Kings works in causing divers Sluces and Sasses to bee made of rotten timber, which ought to have

beene made of the beſt Brickes or Stone, in regard they are to be placed for perpetuity.

FOurthly, he hath abuſed the King in miſſpending his treaſure.

FIfthly, hee hath abuſed the late Earle of Bedford, and divers Noblemen and Gentlemen that adventured with him in his undertaking, by undervaluing the Works which they made, and by hindering their proceedings, to their extream loſſe and diſadvantage, and to the great hindrance of all thoſe Gentlemen that are intereſſed in that great Levell, conſiſting of three hundred and ſeven thouſand Acres.

SIxthly, he hath abuſed divers of his Majeſties Subjects, in taking their Lands from them illegally, without any compoſition or ſatisfaction.

SEventhly, he hath expoſed to wilfull and unneceſſary hazard the Lands, Cattell, Corne, and other goods of many of his Majeſties Subjects, ſo that they are in great danger of being drowned this preſent winter, as doth appeare by this inſuing diſcourſe.

The

THe first worke hee caused to be made, was a Sea Bank in Wysbeach Silkmarsh, which is so slender, that three Roods of the new Sea Banke hath not so much earth in it as one Rood of the old Sea Banke. Hee ought also to have armed the new Sea Banke with Sods on that side which is next the Sea: for being thus sleightly made, and not armed, the Sea hath lately broke the new Sea Banke in divers places, and weakned it for a great space; but in regard it was an easie flood, the damage is little in comparison of what it might have beene, that Land being alwayes well stored with Sheepe, that may soone be lost.

The second worke which hee caused to bee made, was a Sluce at the outfall of a draine, called the Sheir Draine, which worke he commanded to bee made in unseasonable weather, not knowing (I am sure not attending or not heeding) the danger, when it was plainly to bee perceived at the laying downe of the foundation: for at that time the losse might have beene prevented: it is said that that Sluce, with the spade-work and mischances which happened whilest the Pit was making, by the Seas breaking in twice upon them, did cost the King at the least three thousand pounds, which money is every penny lost.

The third worke was the inlarging of a part of Wysbeach River for the space of a mile, wherein he was as much wanting of the depth of the Earle of Bedfords worke, as he exceeded in unnecessary breadth, (leaving the River as narrow as the Earle left it, two miles above the new Worke, and two miles below it,) a worke that is broad and shallow may be made without skill or care. And if the truth may bee spoken without offence, such is that worke. The depth of that new Worke cannot be perceived above one month in the yeare, and that is when the winter floods have recovered the outfall to the Sea; for so soone as the waters doe rise in the River, it seemeth to them that know not the difference, to be a very great inlargement, being very faire to the eie, but wanting depth can performe no better then eye-service.

Whereas the River of Wysbeach runneth from the Towne Bridge to Guyherne six measured miles of the way towards Peterborough in a neare and safe tract, in regard the soyle where the River now runneth, is clay, earth, or Silt; that substance would have inlarged the Bankes on either side of the River, to so great a proportion, that the Countries lying on either side would have been much better secured then ever they were in the times which are past: yet

Sir

Sir *Cornelius Vermuden* either through wilfulneſſe or weakneſſe, left the ſafe and neareſt way where hee might have enlarged the River to what proportion hee pleaſed, and ſecured the Lands on either ſide from danger, as is ſaid before, and made a new Banke of Haſſockes, light ſpungy Moore, and Sedge, in a Fenne called Waterley, where there is neither Clay, Earth, nor Silt, unleſſe it be at the firſt entrance, for the ſpace of a furlong. The new Banke ſo made, is more then two miles and three quarters in length; in which Worke he miſſpent at the leaſt two thouſand and three hundred pounds (or thereabouts.) Beſides which great loſſe to the King, and damage to the owners of the Lands, his intent is to lay foure hundred ſeventy foure Acres of the ſaid Land, waſte to the ſaid River, upon which Land there is three Tenements newly erected, and two other that are ancient: and this he will doe, as he falſly pretendeth, to make that Land a receptacle for the common Waters: whereas in truth he doth it of purpoſe to doe me a miſchiefe, in regard I did contravert ſome of his opinions before the late Lord Treaſurer, when my ſelfe was a Commiſſioner for his Majeſty in October 1638. when God knoweth that which I ſpake was in the ſincerity of my heart, for the advancement of his Majeſties ſervice, without any by reſpects. One of the

Workes

Workes which I then propounded, was the making of a Bricke Sluce below Spaulding, to keep out the Sea Floods: and Sir *Cornelius* disliked it, affirming that there was no way to draine the Fennes, but by making of large Bankes: yet now that he doth what he pleaseth, he himselfe hath very lately not onely approved in speech, (for therein he is very giddy) but he hath covenanted with a workman to make a Timber sluce with a Sasse beside it, to bee placed in the same place, for which the King is to pay three thousand and five hundred pounds, wherein appeareth his deceitfull dealing with the Lord Treasurer, Lord *Cottington*, and my Lord *Banckes*, at that time the Kings Atturney. And if the old fisme Banke were cut, so that the Common waters might come to the new hollow Bank which he hath caused to be made, it is undoubtedly certaine, that they will drown all the rest of the said Lands, being at the least foure thousand Acres; and if that were effected, it would bee no way beneficiall to the generall Drayning, as doth appear by a Certificate made by the principall Gentlemen, and Land holders in that Country. These Lands were banked and drained by an Act of Parliament made the fourth of King *Iames*, and have ever since that time beene maintained and upheld, and were not questioned in the Earle of Bedfords undertaking. Besides

fides there is no mention of making this Receptacle for the Common waters in thoſe Propoſitions which Sir *Cornelius* did deliver to the Kings Majeſty in Ianuary 1638. Yet contrary to all juſtice, hee hath taken theſe Lands from the owners, without any compoſition or ſatisfaction, and intends to drowne all the reſt.

Fifthly, he hath cauſed a Banke of H ſſockes and light ſpungy Moore (which in three or four yeares will ſhrinke to leſſe then halfe the proportion which it now hath, and after that to be ſo much leſſe, as it will bee little better then nothing, for it will bee hollow and ſpungy ſtill.) Such a Banke he hath cauſed to bee made from Guyherne to the Eaſt end of Wittelſey. He hath alſo continued the ſame Banke (but in a better Soyle) from the Weſt end of Wittelſey to Stanground, intending thereby to keepe the River Neene from drowning thoſe Fennes which lye betwixt theſe new Bankes and the North Bank of Bedford River: and certainly they will ſecure them this preſent Winter from Neene. But if the North Banke of Bedford River bee ſetled ſo low that the River of Owſe overtop it, and make breaches in it (as I beleeve it will) thoſe falſe fires will ſoone bee diſcerned. I have often heard Sir *Cornelius* fleight all the workes which were made by the late Earle, as if they

were rather hurtfull then beneficiall to the Country. But hee did the Earle great wrong, for if those Workes faile, all his Hassock Banks will not be worth three pence. Nor could hee have made them, if the Earle had not opened Wysbeach River to the Sea, and kept the Sea from choaking it againe; which was a worke farre exceeding all that Sir *Cornelius* hath done. His plot is by subtilty to rob the late Earle and those Adventurers of the credit of their works, and after that to make all such as know not the truth, beleeve that himselfe with ten thousand pounds, will presently make one hundred thousand Acres fit for the Plow, which is a meere delusion. And as it is wicked in it selfe, so is it attended with a danger much worse then all that hath beene yet discovered. And it is a question whether it be not past recovery. This mischiefe hee hath cast upon many of his Majesties Subjects, inhabiting the low Lands, called Holland in Lincolne shire, and the North side of Wysbeach, both which Countries are full of people, and well stored with Cattell: they lye betweene the Fennes and the Sea, and are much lower then the Common Fennes: they are preserved from Inundation by Bankes consisting of a sandy substance, and are so low, that they cannot defend the said Countries from Inundation. Now Sir *Cornelius* hath turned the Southerne

waters

waters upon them; for there will come three times so much water upon them now as did before. The new Bankes were made in regard Neene cannot passe in its owne Chanell to the Sea, nor dilate it selfe over the face of those Fennes which lye on the South side of Wittelsey, as formerly they did.

Sixtly, he hath caused a Timber Sasse to bee placed neare Stanground, which hath cost the King eight hundred pounds at the least. The use of the Sasse I beleeve will be good (in convenient time) but I like not his direction, who dares to spend the Kings money in Timber workes, when indeed they ought to be made of the best Brickes or Stone, I thinke rather Stone then Brickes, in regard that Country affordeth great plenty of good Stone at very cheape rates. This Sasse is not onely made of Timber, but of Firre Timber, and that so rotten that it was not fit to be used in the making of a good Stable; and in stead of Oken Plankes three inches thicke, it is planked with Deale boards but one inch thicke, which will be rotten before the other works are finished.

Seventhly, he hath caused divers petty Sluces to be made of the like Timber and Deal boards, which ought to have beene made of Brickes or stone, in regard they are intended for perpetuity.

Eightly, he hath misſpent the Kings Treaſure, in giving over large wages unto many workmen; for ſince Michaelmaſſe laſt, money being wanting to forward this goodly deſigne, Sir *Cornelius* procured ſome aſſiſtance from thoſe Gentlemen whoſe Lands lye on the South ſide of Wittelſey, (in regard theſe new Bankes will be ſome advantage unto them) paying the workmen part of their wages, in Bullockes, Sheepe, Beere, Cloth, and other commodities; amongſt them there were ſome payd part of their wages in Wheat at fifteene Shillings the Combe, which did the next day ſell the ſame Wheat for nine Shillings the Comb. And if their wages were not extraordinary large, the condition of thoſe workmen is ſuch, that they will not worke two weekes to an end, unleſſe they doe receive the due of what they earne, much leſſe continue working two months without pay, and then accept of nine ſhillings for fifteene. And here I beſeech you give me leave to give my deceaſed Maſter, and thoſe Noblemen and Gentlemen that adventured with him, their due praiſe; from the firſt to the laſt of their undertaking, their workmen never wanted their wages, but were duly paid every weeke, untill the untimely difference in the yeare 1637. The reaſon why I mention this, is, that you may the better diſcerne how groſly the Kings Majeſty hath beene abuſed, not onely in the loſſe of his trea-

treasure, but in paying the workmen with commodities, and in commodities much inferiour to them which I have named, and indeed not fit to name, which for their baseneſſe I omit. And all this to ſupport an unadviſed action, which I am confident will occaſion a thouſand times more loſſe, then all the good which can be expected, if duly conſidered.

Laſtly, if it be objected, That I have informed againſt Sir *Cornelius* in diſcontent, or becauſe he by his ſubtilty did defeat me of my imployment in thoſe Workes, after I had undergone the greateſt difficulties, and meaneſt ſervitude, from the firſt day to the laſt of the late Earles undertaking, or that I have wronged him in this my Information, and cannot juſtifie every particular which is here expreſſed; inſtead of relieving me, let mee undergoe the diſpleaſure of all them whoſe helpe I doe implore. But if that which I have diſcovered be true, I doe moſt humbly pray that the remainder of my meane eſtate may by your Juſtice be kept from utter ruine; and that a Commiſſion of Inquiry may be directed to examine and certifie my preſent loſſe, and future danger; and that they may alſo conſider whether the drowning of the foure hundred ſeventy foure Acres be-

before mentioned, will bee beneficiall to the ge-
nerall drayning or not. And that in the mean
time it may be ordered, that the old Banke
may not bee cut.

FINIS.